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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 001076

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF, AF/SPG, D, INR, DRL, PRM, DARFUR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DARFUR PEACE AGREEMENT SIGNED AFTER INTENSIVE
NEGOTIATIONS

1. (SBU) Summary: The Government of Sudan and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) faction leader Minni Minnawi signed the Darfur Peace Agreement on May 5 following days of intensive negotiations led by the U.S. and U.K. During a final all-night, early morning session led by Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, SLM faction leader Minni Minnawi overcame dissent among his commanders and personal tragedy, to sign the deal. Faction leader Abdelwahid Nur and Justice and Equality Movement leader Dr. Khalil Ibrahim refused to sign, citing various powersharing issues. In the final moments, a group of non-Fur Abdelwahid faction members broke ranks to sign the document. In the days following the signature, Obasanjo and members of the international community tried fruitlessly to convince Abdelwahid to join the agreement. The African Union will leave the document open for signature until May 15. International partners are debating the utility of working with Abdelwahid or finding another Fur leader to become party to the agreement. Implementation of the agreement will be crucial to instill confidence in the peace process. End Summary.

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INTENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS ON SECURITY AND POWERSHARING
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2. (SBU) Deputy Secretary Zoellick and A/S for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer led USDEL in four days of intensive discussions with the parties on security and powersharing issues. USDEL tackled the task of closing the remaining gaps between the parties on disarmament of the janjaweed and integration of the movements forces into the Sudanese armed forces. U.K. Minister of State for International Cooperation Hillary Benn worked on strengthening the position of Senior Special Assistant and the regional authority in an effort to persuade the movements to sign on. Zoellick and Benn met with the African Union mediation and the parties continuously from May 2 to 4, listening to their concerns and drafting additional language for the AU Mediation Draft Peace Agreement.

3. (SBU) The targeted discussions built upon US-facilitated bilateral meetings between Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) faction leader Minni Minnawi and the Government of Sudan over the sequencing and conditionality of the disarmament of the janjaweed and the assembly of movement forces. In addition, USDEL had facilitated discussions between the two parties on the integration of movement forces into the Sudanese Armed Forces and police as well as offering education and training for others. On powersharing, the U.S.-U.K. team developed provisions to strengthen the position of Senior Special Assistant by explicitly spelling out that this person is the Chairman of the new regional authority and would have control over key nominations and significant leverage in cases of disagreement with state governors.

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THRILLA AT THE VILLA
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4. (SBU) The final stage of the negotiations featured an all-night high drama at times resembling an episode of "Survivor" beginning on May 4 and ending at 8:00 p.m. May 5 at the presidential villa, led by Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, African Union President Sassou Nguesso, and AU Chairman Alpha Konare. Each party was brought in separately to state their positions. First up was SLM's Minnawi faction. Minni had told Deputy Secretary Zoellick earlier that he could accept the agreement. However, he changed his position at the heads of state meeting, putting forward additional demands on powersharing from the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Obasanjo and USDEL asked him to reconsider his position and gave him time to consult with his politicians and commanders after chastising him for breaking his word.

5. (SBU) Next up, SLM's Abdelwahid Nur, listened intently to a letter to him from President Bush, and then refused to sign because the document did not give Darfur a Vice Presidency or immediately make it a region. He, too, was sent off to reconsider his decision, but only after Obasanjo

reminded him that Nigerian peacekeepers died at the hands of his troops and the President also accused him of personal betrayal. USDEL reminded Abdelwahid of the consequences of impeding the peace process while others asked him if he wanted to be compared to Foday Sankoh or Jonas Savimbi. JEM was the third party to face the heads of state. Dr. Khalil Ibrahim restated maximalist demands including some on compensation that demonstrated a lack of familiarity with the agreement. In addition, he insulted Obasanjo personally. In a moment of high drama, Obasanjo asked Khalil who he thought he was and told Khalil that his disrespect for his elders and authority indicated that he was "neither well-born or well-bred". Obasanjo then unceremoniously kicked JEM out of the villa. The session broke up at 5:00 a.m.

16. (SBU) Upon resumption four hours later, SLM faction leader Minni Minnawi gave Obasanjo the needed breakthrough when he accepted the agreement with reservations. Minni said the reservations could be dealt with during the implementation of the agreement. Minnawi also asked for time to meet with the head of the Sudanese Government delegation Magzoub Kaliffa and again brief his commanders prior to signature. Minnawi had just heard about the death of his brother allegedly at the hands of the janjaweed near Khor Abeche that morning.

17. (SBU) Finally, Obasanjo brought in the Government of Sudan delegation and told it that one of the movements had agreed to sign. The Government of Sudan expressed its concerns but accepted the document with the US-UK negotiated changes. Pleased with the turn of events, Obasanjo relayed a story about how monkeys rub both ends of a banana in the dirt to prevent other monkeys from taking it back. He told the parties they could not take back their consent to the agreement.

18. (SBU) Obasanjo continued to work on Abdelwahid while the signing ceremony was being arranged. Obasanjo held two other meetings with him as did international partners, but to no avail with Abdelwahid changing his "concerns" from region, vice-presidency, compensation, to security issues. Abdelwahid also appeared at the signing ceremony but was personally asked to leave by Obasanjo after the President determined that he did not intend to sign. A group of non-Fur Abdelwahid members, led by Abderahmane Moussa, broke ranks and entered the signing ceremony, adding to the day's drama. (Note: Moussa has now been invited to the E.U. and the upcoming African Union Peace and Security Council Meeting. End note.)

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COMINGS AND GOINGS
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19. (SBU) The Government of Sudan delegation departed Abuja on May 8. The rebel movements will be transported via UN aircraft to Sudan on May 10.

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COMMENT
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10. (SBU) The final Darfur Peace Agreement represents the best effort of the African Union mediation and international community to meet the demands of the factious rebel movements, which consistently demonstrated poor negotiating skills and refused to back away from their maximalist positions for five months. The U.S.-U.K. effort strengthened the agreement in favor of the movements demands, particularly on powersharing. SLM faction leader Minni Minnawi showed genuine leadership as he accepted the DPA in the face of concerns from his field commanders. He has already begun talking to the SPLM about political party development. Abdelwahid Nur lost a significant opportunity to prove himself a leader by allowing bad advice and his own inflated sense of self-worth get in the way of an important step forward for the people of Darfur. Most observers want the Fur to be party to the agreement, but wonder whether Abdelwahid is the right person to pursue at this juncture. Justice and Equality Movement proved it was not interested in peace and can be expected to continue its spoiler role, most likely from Chad. For its part, the GOS delegation wants non-Zaghawa buy-in to the agreement and will make some good faith steps toward implementation of the agreement. The international community will need to keep pressure on the GOS and Minnawi faction, as well as the non-signatories, to abide by the accord in order to ensure the implementation necessary to build the confidence that a peaceful Darfur is a genuine possibility.

11. (SBU) This cable was not cleared by the Deputy Secretary or A/S Frazer prior to departure.

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CAMPBELL